

## ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

**[0041]** Methods for generating and maintaining confidential medical information, and in particular electronic medical records, that are operative to both preserve the secrecy and confidentiality of such information, but further enables medical information to be generated for purposes of research, public health, or healthcare operations. According to a preferred embodiment, confidential medical information is input into a conventional electronic medical records system and maintained in a first format, but is further converted to a second format whereby such information is purged of all patient information and identifiers. Such de-identified data is compiled on a routine basis, such as a daily basis, and forwarded to an entity certified to receive such information pursuant to a research or data use agreement. The invention further comprises methods for providing a prescription benefit via the distribution of prescription medications through mail order wherein such medications are procured from either a domestic or foreign source depending upon cost of the prescription medications.